

First elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1986, Allen has served the Sixty-First district with distinction for the past twenty years. During his tenure he was a strong proponent of our Second Amendment rights and worked hard to protect the family and our religious liberties. A social and fiscal conservative, he voted consistently to ensure that Alabama provided an economic atmosphere in which business and industry could grow and prosper.

Allen is a true friend of the volunteer fire fighter. Through his efforts, a three mil revenue tax was enacted in 1999, and amended in 2004, to provide badly needed funding to the volunteer fire departments in Pickens County. This funding allows the volunteer fire departments to purchase equipment, provide training and cover operating costs. This has greatly enhanced their firefighting capabilities, thus reducing insurance rates and thereby saving money for Alabama families.

He served as a Commissioner on the Alabama Forestry Commission from 1979 to 1983, served as president of the Alabama Division for the Society of American Foresters, is a Trustee of the Alabama Forest Products Workman's Compensation Fund, served as president and is a lifetime member of the Alabama Wildlife Federation, is a member of the Alabama Cattlemen's Association, a member of the Sierra Club and a member of sixteen volunteer fire departments. Also, Allen has served on the board of directors for the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority since his appointment by Governor Guy Hunt in 1991.

He has been distinguished as the recipient of the Governor's Conservationist of the Year Award in Forestry in 1982, the Kelly Mosley Environmental Award in 1985 and the APA Southwestern United States Technical Writing Award in 1981.

Of all of Allen's accomplishments, perhaps his greatest achievement was convincing the former JoAnn Kimberly to marry him. They were married on September 15, 1949 and are the proud parents of five children; Butch, Allen, Jr., Kim, James and Michael. Allen and JoAnn are faithful members of Reform First United Methodist Church where Allen has served as a Lay Leader and Lay Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to honor State Representative Allen Layson for his many achievements and his enduring impact on his country, state, community, friends and family. He is a man of great dignity and character who takes pride in the accomplishments of those he has helped over the years. Allen is an inspiring role model for all of us and I join his family, friends and colleagues in wishing him God's richest blessings in his retirement.

HONORING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE VETERANS HOMES

SPEECH OF

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, as a cosponsor of H. Con. Res. 347, I am pleased to support this resolution hon-

oring the work of the National Association of State Veterans Homes and the 119 homes across the country that honor our nation's heroes.

I am proud to work on closely with the State Veterans Home in Paramus, New Jersey. This excellent facility is run by caring individuals who work hard each day to see that our veterans are given the care that they earned sacrificing for our nation. Veterans Affairs Secretary Nicholson recently had the opportunity to tour the facility with me and see the tremendous effort that Doris Neibart, director of the home, and all the nurses and staff have put into caring for veterans in the final stages of life's journey.

Throughout the 20th Century and now into the 21st, the American soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine has been a force for good in this world. Working together, they have kept our nation safe from the threats of fascism, communism, and now terrorism. We owe them all a great debt of gratitude and the best care we can provide.

Our nation has a rich history of promoting freedom and spreading democracy, a history that was made possible by countless individuals who served in our armed forces. We remember all who contributed as well as those that stand ready to serve the cause of freedom today. I am proud to represent so many selfless and brave heroes and to honor those who work for their welfare.

GROWING SUPPORT FOR THE SAFE COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced legislation in the House of Representatives aimed at addressing the looming financial crisis facing the Nation, H.R. 5552—the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act. The bill would establish a national bipartisan commission that will put everything—entitlement spending as well as all other Federal programs and our Nation's tax policies—on the table and require Congress to vote up or down on its recommendations in their entirety, similar to the process set in 1988 to close military bases. Mandating congressional action on the panel's recommendations is what differentiates this commission from previous ones.

Support for the bill is coming from both sides of the aisle. I submit for the Record a recent analysis by the Heritage Foundation; a letter of support from the Concord Coalition; a letter from Douglas Holt-Eakin, former director of the Congressional Budget Office, and letters from several former Members.

I also am pleased to submit today the names of 20 of my colleagues who are co-sponsoring the SAFE Commission measure and urge the remainder of my colleagues to join as well. This legislation will be good for the future of America.

THE CONCORD COALITION,
Arlington, VA, June 28, 2006.

Hon. FRANK WOLF,
House of Representatives
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. WOLF: On behalf of The Concord Coalition, I am writing to express our deep

appreciation for your leadership in sponsoring the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Act, which would establish a bipartisan commission to recommend legislation addressing our nation's unsustainable long-term fiscal outlook.

We strongly agree with you that the need for serious action is not just an economic imperative but a moral one as well. We also share your view that partisan divisions in Washington have become so wide that a commission may now be the only way forward on this issue. By establishing a fiscal policy commission with a broad mandate, meaningful public engagement, and the ability to consider all policy options, your legislation represents a very constructive step toward bringing about consensus solutions.

The demographic and fiscal challenges facing the budget in the years ahead are well known. Analysts of diverse ideological perspectives and nonpartisan officials at the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have all warned that current fiscal policy is unsustainable over the long-term.

What is needed now is a clear commitment to address these issues in a straightforward, generationally equitable and bipartisan manner. Achieving consensus around the hard choices that must eventually be made will require open minds and bipartisan cooperation. Your legislation would establish a process to do just that.

Recently, The Concord Coalition organized a forum with experts from across the political spectrum to discuss the possibility of establishing a bipartisan commission to deal with our long-term fiscal outlook. Three conclusions from the forum stand out:

The commission must have meaningful participation and input from a broad range of views. Bipartisan support is essential to enacting and maintaining policies that will put the budget on a fiscally sustainable course.

The commission should have a broad mandate with no limitations on what policy options the commission can consider or preconditions on what must be included—or not included—in a proposal. Everything must be on the table, including revenues as well as entitlements and other spending.

The commission should engage the public in a dialogue about the long-term fiscal challenges and the tradeoffs that will be necessary to bring about a more secure and sustainable economic future.

The Concord Coalition commends your proposal because it recognizes each of these conclusions. The SAFE Act would establish a bipartisan commission of experts and legislators appointed by the President and Congressional leaders of both parties. The Commission would be directed to hold hearings across the country and incorporate the input from the public in its report. This is a very welcome provision. The public should be treated as if it were, in effect, a member of the commission. Doing so will enhance the commission's credibility and help build acceptance for its recommendations. Our experience hosting meetings around the nation on this issue has demonstrated that when the American people are armed with the facts and given the opportunity for honest dialogue, they are willing to set priorities and make the hard choices that often are not made in Washington.

Most importantly, the Commission would be allowed to consider all policy options to address the imbalance between long-term spending commitments and projected revenues, including reforms of entitlement programs and tax laws. In our view, this is an essential prerequisite for attracting well-respected individuals to serve on the commission and for finding solutions that are both substantive and politically viable.